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The Radical Right

STATINTL

WASHINGTON
NELSON ROCKEFELLER has injected a note of reality into the world of fantasy that has engaged so many Republicans in recent months.

The toughness of his attack on the radical right has jolted the "go-with-Goldy" enthusiasts who had convinced themselves that they were riding the wave of the future, that the amiable Arizonan had set the prairies on fire and that there was no stopping him from getting the Republican nomination.

The Barry Goldwater "boomlet" has never been more than that, notwithstanding the best efforts of some Democrats to encourage it. Politically it was tempting for Democrats to see the Republican party captured by the "ultras." This would make life much easier for President Kennedy because his associates have long been convinced—and correctly so—that the common sense of the American voter would repudiate any candidate regarded as spokesman for extremists.

But there is a danger in allowing either major party to be captured by a violent minority. It matters what explanation there is for any individual's extremist attitudes. This just postpones politics before the nation's welfare.

Gov. Rockefeller has responsibly taken his strong statement. Whether this helps or hurts his own campaign for the Presidency remains to be seen. But a vacuum will be opening, and it will be filled by the liberal Democrats, at least silently, perhaps even some of the "ultras" who have been so busy in the water to

Among the Republican moderates there was a growing sense of uneasiness. Except for Sens. Kuchel and Javits, few had anything to say publicly and neither Senator was able to produce any impact comparable to Gov. Rockefeller's statement.

Just how important is the "radical right" in American politics?

An interesting statistical examination of the John Birch Society was made by the Gallup Poll in two studies, one in April, 1961, the second in February, 1962. According to the first poll some 39 million persons had heard of the organization. Of these 44 per cent had an unfavorable impression, 9 per cent were favorable and 47 per cent had formed no judgment.

The second poll showed that some 58 million persons had heard of the society. Of these, 8 per cent were favorably impressed, 43 per cent had an unfavorable impression and about 49 per cent had no opinion.

Author Alan F. Westin, who had been following Birchite activities closely, projected these percentage figures. He concluded that somewhere between 6 and 95 million persons felt the Birch Society was "a useful organization in the anti-Communist cause."

What made these figures so meaningful was that between the time of the two polls many traditional conservatives, even some to the far right, had openly expressed dismay over the outlandish accusations made by Robert Welch, the founder of the society. These included Birchite charges that President Eisenhower was a "tool" of the Communists, that Gen. Foster Dulles was a "tool" of the Communists, and

that Allen Dulles, the former head of the Central Intelligence Agency "is the most protected and untouchable supporter of communism, next to Eisenhower himself, in Washington."

THE Birch Society remains a secret organization and apparently adheres to the notion that the methods of totalitarianism are most effective in fighting communism. It has some 60,000 members by its own count. But as any Birchite will tell you, vis-a-vis the Communists, this is no accurate gauge of its influence. A year ago the society had 41 staff members working in its home office, 35 fully salaried and expenses-paid "co-ordinators" and some 70 "partially-paid" volunteers.

This is the hard-core of the "radical right," although there are many peripheral organizations and individuals. They range from George Rockwell who now declaims against "the Nigger Revolution" to members of the K. K. K.

Nelson Rockefeller had all these people and all their fanatic literature in mind when he said, "One must be either for or against such forces. The time for temporizing is over."

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